

## JOHN MUNRO ELDER

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COLONEL JOHN MUNRO ELDER, C.M.G., B.A., M.D., C.M., died in Montreal February 5, 1922, after a lingering illness involving some mental and much physical disability. In his death the Canadian profession lost an honored member who throughout his life served his fellow citizens and his country with zeal, energy, and marked ability.

Born in the town of Huntingdon, in the Province of Quebec, in 1858, he received his early education in the high school of his own town. In 1877 he entered the Faculty of Arts in McGill University, from which he graduated with distinction in 1881. The following year was spent in acting as principal of the Huntingdon Academy. He entered the Faculty of Medicine and after a career notable not only as a student but as an athlete, he graduated in 1885. That was the year of the Riel Rebellion in the district of the Saskatchewan, and shortly after graduation he accepted the appointment of surgeon to the Montreal Garrison Artillery and accompanied that regiment in its expedition against that rebellion.

On his return he commenced practice in his native town, but in 1890 moved into the city of Montreal. He had not been long in that city before he was offered a position in the Department of Anatomy in McGill University. Here he steadily rose and in 1894 succeeded Dr. Birkett in the position of senior demonstrator. In 1896 he was appointed as ~~lecturer~~ in anatomy and in medical and surgical applied anatomy. In the following year ~~he~~ was elected as assistant surgeon to the Montreal General Hospital, and was given the appointment of demonstrator in surgery by Professor F. J. Shepherd who had a high opinion of his abilities. In 1898 on the death of Dr. Kirkpatrick he was chosen by the governors of the hospital to fill the vacancy and thus became full surgeon of the hospital and an assistant professor in the chair of surgery.

In both the hospital and the college he showed himself to be an administrator of no mean ability. His lectures were greatly appreciated by his students, and there was always a full attendance, both at his demonstrations in the hospital and at his class lectures in the University. He was a favorite with the students for he was not only a good athlete himself, but took great interest in all the athletic activities.

Throughout his life Colonel Elder maintained his military interest. On his return from the North-West he continued his connection with the Montreal Garrison Artillery for many years, and on retiring was promoted to the rank of surgeon lieutenant colonel. When the Great War broke out and the formation of No. 3 Canadian General Hospital was under consideration, Colonel Elder was the first to volunteer his services and was appointed officer in charge of the surgical division with the rank of lieutenant colonel. The selection of officers for that division was largely his own, and the wisdom shown by him in its organization was fully proved by the excellent work done by all its members. At the front in the actual surgical work of the hospital he took a most active part, and during a battle period when the work was heavy, he was frequently occupied in the operating room from early morning until a late hour at night. At one of these periods of strain while operating upon a suppurating gunshot wound of the thigh he received a severe infection of the right forefinger, which was followed by serious illness and a protracted convalescence.

In November, 1917, on the retirement owing to illness of the Commanding Officer General Birkett, Doctor Elder was promoted to colonel and appointed his successor, and continued as such until February, 1918, when he received the appointment of consultant to the British Army with headquarters at Rouen.

In his service overseas Colonel Elder's exceptional surgical skill and valuable organizing power brought him "mention in despatches" by Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig. Later on in further recognition of his services he was created a Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George.

Colonel Elder during his long service both in the Montreal General Hospital and as commanding officer in charge of the surgical division of No. 3 Canadian General Hospital, was highly esteemed by his colleagues and greatly beloved by his patients. He was an able diagnostician and his long training in anatomy gave him confidence and dexterity in his work. He kept well abreast of the times and made many contributions to the literature of surgery. His untimely removal was deeply mourned by all his confrères, and by all who had the pleasure of working under him.





JOHN M. ELDER  
1858-1922







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